UNIVERSITY OF EXETER STUDENTS' GUILD

Trustee Board

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 17th May 2021
Microsoft Teams Meeting. 2pm – 5pm.

Ref	Minute	Action
	Present: Sunday Blake (President/Chair), Julie Walkling (External Trustee/Deputy Chair), Penny Dinh (VP Education), Ruby Jones (VP Welfare & Diversity), Liv Harvey (VP Activities), Alfie Carlisle (Student Trustee – ASC), Sumiah Elbortoukaly (Student Trustee – ***attended from 3:40pm***), Deborah Watson (External Trustee), Margaret Laithwaite (External Trustee),	
	In attendance: Nick Smith (External Consultant – ***NickS, In attendance for the Articles update item***), Hannah Brown (Head of Finance), Alison Chambers (Chief Executive – AC), Lauren Chatfield (Executive Support & Facilities Officer – Minute Taker).	
	Apologies: Mariam Abdelkarim (Student Trustee), Natalie Stewart (External Trustee – NS – ***On maternity leave***), Rob Bending (Former Director of Finance & Resources).	
TB-20.60	**Minutes of the Last Meeting – 22nd March 2021 and Matters Arising (Review of Action Log)** To discuss & agree: Approved as a correct record. 1 x typo: decision to change to reflect approval of both cost of living and staff increments.	
	Notifications of Any Other Business: • 2 x AC, 1 x ASC.	
	Notifications of Any New Conflicts of Interest: • 1 x SB – Trustee for United Foundation.	
Verbal	**Student Experience Update & Officer Priorities** To receive: SB provided a verbal update on student experience and officer priorities. Board members were asked for any questions and comments. Key points: • VP Welfare & Diversity – Main focus is around student safety, students have approached us with ideas that could be implemented. RJ/LH set up a meeting with the Provost and Linda Peka to discuss about next steps – from this meeting the University have implemented a Gender Safety group that is meeting regularly to discuss these issues – ToR being finalised.	

	RJ has been meeting with two different groups with the same idea which is an evening walking home buddy scheme – we have been writing a report that will go to the GSG. Had the go ahead for 900 personal alarms that students can access. Another wellbeing town hall on Friday for students to give feedback. • VP Activities – Guild awards are being held next Friday. Festival of Discovery kicks off next week for a fortnight – launching the Give It a Go scheme as part of this; we have music groups performing and outdoor fitness classes etc. Tying up loose ends – working on how we can promote the Guild hardship fund – we secured £2k through the annual fund for this. • VP Education – Main focus is tuition fee refund campaign; PD have been working alongside other SU's running similar campaigns – the students united against fees campaign; started by LSE SU and has been followed by other SU's. Planning a national day of action in June – updates to follow. Also working on wellbeing support for PGR students • Guild President – Lots of Freedom of Speech work happening – attending various conferences; Working on handover to the new office team; working on a relationship mapping document for GDPR data sharing on student complaints. • Israel/Palestine issues – SB highlighted officers are managing issues to the recent Israel/Palestine issues raised in the media, and a march officers were invited to on Saturday to support Palestine – this was declined until officers knew the best steps forward. NUS have released a statement that was perceived quite negatively. Officers have been in touch with societies who have been impacted. SB against putting a statement out on these issues – board members in support of not taking a political stance, but to offer wellbeing support to any students impact. **Agreed Received**	
TB-20.61	**Chief Executive Report and Objectives** • **Workstreams 1 & 2 update** <u>To receive:</u> AC provided the CEO report and objectives and workstreams 1 & 2 update. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions and comments. Key points: • AC gave a briefing on the paper • NSS – working with the University to see what we can get from the NSS and when – AC asked board for views on NSS as a measure of student satisfaction. JW emphasised that the NSS is still important for right now – AC queried if board would like us to provide an action plan to support this. JW suggested that any free text comments related to the SU on Q26 would be very useful. ML in support of a generating an action plan. JW suggested it would be useful to find out from Linda Peka who	

	fills in the NSS return each year; AC/SB to update board on whether Senate has a summary of the NSS report. • Senior Team Recruitment – Head of OD and Head of Student Engagement posts have now been recruited to – Head of OD to start in August, Head of SE to start in July. • CEO objectives – provided new objectives – new have been highlighted in yellow, continued with the RAG rating in other areas and removed any objectives that are not applicable anymore or are forming parts of other work. Board gave thanks to AC on the updated objectives. • Freedom of information requests under free speech – There was an issue back in January with some events challenged by the University as the risk assessments weren't thorough enough for digital online activity; a new risk assessment was drafted to support this, but then we recognised the need to do more work around this long term. Event approvals were paused for 2 weeks, and an external speaker framework review was carried out. The University have now received a FOI request from the Free Speech union for all correspondence between the UoE and the Guild relating to those events in January. The Guild cannot be FOI'd as a charity, but the University have been asked for their correspondence with us – They planned to send the FOI return today. AC has requested an itemised list of what they propose to send. AC requested support from the UoE to the officers on communications.. AC highlighted that this should not be a risk to the Guild; however there is likely to be media interest following this FOI. AC asked board members for their thoughts. ML highlighted it would be useful to find out from the University if they can provide media training for officers moving forward. <u>Organisational Review: Workstream 1 & 2 update</u> • Commercial transfer/Lease agreements – Unknowns around dilapidation charges; challenging these charges – meeting with the University next Wednesday. • Commercial transfer/Partnerships manager – New commercial contracts with the University outline that for 2 years we cannot generate any income from commercial endeavours. AC is looking into options for the post moving forward as bringing in cost neutral activities for students. PD raised it would be beneficial to see if the partnerships posts can work as a relationship managers with organisations we work with such as UCU and NUS. • Democracy/governance review – AC raised how the Miragold democracy & governance review is still paused. JW has put AC in touch with a Governance contact who previously worked at Sheffield SU, and is qualified to a high level in governance – they have been able to offer us work in kind, this will include: basic regulationary framework, making sure we are complaint; creating a cycle of business; delegation of authority; looking at trustee training over the summer.	

	• Democracy/governance review – Discussion had on payment of Miragold work completed to date. AC highlighted that we are prepared to pay for the governance work that Miragold completed in full but not the full amount for the democracy work. PD raised it would be useful to know if we will be pausing meetings like Guild Council during this time, as we need to ensure that we do not miss the opportunity to get feedback from students and that does not fall through the gaps. AC has liaised with Dem Soc to ask them for thoughts on next steps for democracy; they are looking at what democratic structures they can get in place for this year and then look at longer term. ACTION: AC to liaise with Linda Peka on who fills out the NSS return. ACTION: AC/SB to update Board on whether Senate has a summary of the NSS report. ACTION: AC to take offline generating an NSS action plan. **Agreed Received**	**AC** **AC** **AC**
TB-20.62	**Paid College Officer Role Options Appraisal** <u>To agree:</u> AC presented a paper on the paid College Officer role options appraisal. Paper taken as read. Key points: • AC gave a briefing on the paper. • AC highlighted that the recommendation in the paper is option 2: to pay college officers this year and revisit this decision at the end of the year. **All in agreement to approve Option 2: pay the college officer roles this year and revisit the decision next year.** **Agreed Received**	**All**
TB-20.63	**2021/22 Budget** <u>To agree:</u> The proposed budget for 2021/22 was presented for feedback. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions and comments. Key points: • AC presented the proposed budget for 2021/22. This is the first budget following the commercial sale to the University. • Unknowns around dilapidations charge – lease agreements, £62k, deduction to the block grant – AC has challenged this charge as it is not representative of the relationship between the Guild and the University – we are hoping they will waive this charge, but at the moment it is looking unlikely. • 3 items of strategic development outside of the budget: give it a go; rebrand; and digital platform. These business cases have been put forward to the University for consideration. • This does not currently include any capital spend – this will be looked at in the coming weeks.	

	• The finalised version of the budget will come to the July Board meeting for approval. • ASC queried regarding the internal audit – £5k, what is this and is this different to external auditors? HB advised that external audits are a annual statutory requirement that looks at audit of financial statements; whereas an internal auditor would act for the good of the trustees and ensure that management and policies are in place. The Guild has not had an internal auditor in recent years. • ASC queried regarding partnerships line – approx. £4k, is this the partnerships manager? AC highlighted that this role would work well in line with the Give It A Go programme but discussions need to clarify how this role can best be utilised. **Agreed Received**	
Verbal	**Patrick Heron Painting** <u>To receive:</u> AC provided a verbal update on the Patrick Heron painting. Key points: • No further update – AC chasing the University, LH attending the Arts & Culture board, AC to ask the University to give us an update then. **Agreed Received**	
Verbal	**HR update** • **Guild senior team recruitment** <u>To discuss:</u> AC presented a verbal update on HR and Guild senior team recruitment. Board members were asked for any questions and comments. Key points: • HB has now started with us as Head of Finance; CT has been promoted to the post of Head of Marketing & Brand. • Head of OD and Head of SE posts have now been appointed to last week. **Agreed Received**	
TB-20.64a TB-20.64b	**Sub-Committee Update** • **Finance & Audit Committee; Minutes 11/05/21** • **Compliance, Governance and Risk Committee; Minutes 14/04/21** <u>To receive:</u> ML/JW gave a verbal update on the Board sub-committee meetings. The previous minutes were circulated for Board overview. Board members were asked for any questions and comments. Key points: <u>Finance and Audit Committee update</u> • ML updated on the audit tender – following unsatisfactory audit timescales from our most recent audit. It was agreed to proceed with Griffin Chartered Accountants who are a local firm.	

	• HMRC update – response received from the HMRC senior complaints officer; enquiries ongoing. • Management accounts – received up to the end of March. • Societies negative balances – working a policy to support this. • Accounting software – looking at options for technical support • ExSIF policy – met with Sheffield on their model, work to be done on feasibility. • Finance strategy – to draft and come back to F&AC in the autumn. <u>Compliance, Governance and Risk Committee update</u> • Overall compliance report that focused on all areas – covers GDPR; cyber security – a false cyber-attack was carried out on the guild systems, worked out well • Guild restart – lots of issues following restarting the guild following sale of commercial • Freedom of speech/external speakers framework • SLAs/Lease agreement • Discussed issues with the democracy and governance review • HR update – HR dashboard was provided • Risk register – AC has simplified the risk register format; AC is producing a cover sheet which puts into text what the key risks are currently to ensure that everyone understands the risks. Discussion had on simplifying the risk but ensuring the key points are explicit. • Discussions had on membership of the CGR committee • Complaints log – to ensure we take note of any lessons learned from complaints, alongside drafting a complaints policy. **Agreed Received**	
Verbal	**Articles update** <u>To receive:</u> NickS joined the meeting to provide a verbal update on articles. Key points: • NickS presented the updated articles and outlined the changes in the document. • Solicitors responded and gave thoughts on the articles – we are 95% there; the changes required are mainly administrative rather than impacting students' rights. • JW queried – 14 days for appeals to remove a Trustees;; is this working days? NickS clarified it is all days. • JW – what is it you need to do as a trustee in order to be removed, to clarify what this is – and also is the process different for external trustees. NickS advised this would be supported via the byelaws however code of conduct for members would apply to everyone which would include all types of trustees. • Byelaws update: The Board agreed that they felt the Guild had to allow all students who were on an Exeter accredited course to be members to ensure that the 1994 Education Act provisions were met. This would need discussion had around	

	Truro student representation across the Guild/The SU. AC raised that we are currently in the process of looking at the byelaws overall and proposed that we do not change the byelaw on Truro student representation for now, but we allow those students to stand for committee positions. Board were in support of this position. **Agreed Received**	
	Any Other Business <u>To receive:</u> • Timeliness of papers – ASC highlighted an issue with the late distribution of board papers for this meeting. AC gave apologies for the lateness and emphasised that this is a one off occasion due to the work going on behind the scenes, alongside the lack of staff capacity whilst we wait for senior management to be fully appointed to. • Natalie maternity update – AC updated board members with the news that NS has welcomed her new arrival on the 5th May 2021. • Board feedback form – AC to circulate a survey to trustees offline for feedback on this board meeting. **Agreed Received**	
	Date of Next Meeting – Monday 5th July 2021	

Action Log

Meeting Date	Ref No.	Action	Action owner	Target date
11/01/2021	TB-20.33	SB/AC to take offline discussion regarding Board away day agendas. To include this on the cycle of business. UPDATE 06/07/21 – In progress, induction scheduled, possible strategy day before September.	SB/AC	
11/01/2021	TB-20.33	SMT/Officers to work offline to discuss more regular student experience updates to Board. UPDATE 06/07/21 – In progress, communications plan for new officer team commencing August 2021.	CT	
11/01/2021	TB-20.34	AC to share the original tender for the Democracy and Governance review offline. UPDATE 06/07/21 – Complete, unable to locate original tender, Miragold contract terminated at reduced cost, new project commissioned.	AC	
11/01/2021	Verbal	SMT to bring back a recommendation to a future Board meeting regarding full time officer pay. UPDATE 06/07/21 – In progress, Appointments and nominations committee to be established by September.	SMT	
17/05/2021	TB-20.61	AC to liaise with Linda Peka on who fills out the NSS return. UPDATE 06/07/21 – Complete.	AC	
17/05/2021	TB-20.61	AC/SB to update Board on whether Senate has a summary of the NSS report. UPDATE 06/07/21 – In progress, due 16th July 2021.	AC/SB	

17/05/2021	TB-20.61	AC to take offline generating an NSS action plan. UPDATE 06/07/21 – In progress, Results due 16th July, action plan developed thereafter.	AC	